DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 147 957 EA 010 153

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TITLE	A Management System for Developing a Comprehensive Education Plan for Lanier County, Georgia.
INSTITUTION	Lanier County Board of Education, Lakeland, Ga.
PUB DATE	74
NOTE	32p.; For related documents, see EA 010 154-155; Not available in paper copy due to marginal legibility of original document
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; *Management Systems; Needs Assessment; *Program Descriptions; Program Development; School Community Relationship; *School Districts
IDENTIFIERS	*Lanier County Public Schools GA

ABSTRACT

This publication describes a management system developed by the Lanier County (Georgia) Public Schools for use in developing and managing a comprehensive education plan for the county's schools. The management system is intended to provide a structure for moving from what Lanier County citizens believe about public education to the identification of specific activities involving students and teachers. It is organized in a logical sequence of ten steps that correspond to the components of the overall education plan. These steps include 1) establishing an educational philosophy reflective of the county's citizens, 2) defining students' needs and interests, 3) establishing broad program goals, 4) determining the current status and needs of the educational program, 5) formulating objectives, 6) defining broad program concepts, 7) identifying activities to achieve the objectives, 8) identifying specific program and management needs for implementing the activities, 9) evaluating results of the activities, and 10) disseminating information to the school community. Each step of the management system is described in a brief separate section, and a detailed timeline for developing the comprehensive education plan is also included. (Author/JG)

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A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION PLAN FOR LANIER COUNTY, GEORGIA

LANIER COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
LAKELAND, GEORGIA
1974-75
Mr. Richard Young, Superintendent

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to the Board of Education

EA 010 153

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MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
FOR
DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION PLAN
FOR
LANIER COUNTY SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

The Lanier County School System must not be satisfied with the status quo if it is to provide no less than an adequate education for the youth and certain adult citizens of the county; this was the view on educational change expressed by the Board of Education when it recently initiated the development of a plan for a comprehensive education program in cooperation with the Georgia State Department of Education.

In an attempt to provide the most effective educational program possible, the Board of Education will develop and submit to the State Department of Education by January, 1975 a plan for a complete comprehensive education program that will focus on the needs and interests of the youth and certain adult citizens of Lanier County. After the plan has been reviewed and approved by the State Department of Education, it will be recommended for funding to the 1975 General Assembly of the Georgia State Legislature.

The cost has been underwritten in part by the State Department of Education through a mini-grant which was awarded the Lanier County School System solely for the development of an education plan.

A process of involving representatives from all segments of the school-community will be utilized to develop the plan, so that the product will more accurately reflect the philosophy of the Lanier County schools and will encompass the needs and interests of the target school population, as well as enhancing acceptance and support of the plan on the part of all citizens of Lanier County.

An Education Task Force comprised of 19 members representing the Board of Education, each school faculty, the administration, the special area service units, and the community will be the major vehicle for involving the total school-community. The Lanier County Education Task Force will, with consultative assistance, process the school-community through each stage of development of the plan. Its members will develop strategies, organize and conduct meetings, communicate regularly with their respective segments of the school-community and make final recommendations to the Board of Education. Collecting and managing data input from the school-community is the major responsibility of the Education Task Force. It should be noted that the school-community is generally defined as all citizens of Lanier County and specifically categorized as students, parents, educational and other community people. It should be further noted that when plan is used hereafter in the management system, it means a comprehensive education plan.

The plan will be comprehensive in that it will encompass all instructional program and operational components of the school system. It will describe in detail a rationale for decision-making and a system for implementing each program component. Included in the system will not only be the content to be taught, but also the process to be used by teacher and administrator.

It is recognized that to redefine and plan even in general terms a total school system is a mammoth project and that the magnitude of this particular project is compounded by the amount of involvement planned for the school-community.

In addition to the magnitude of the project, there is limited time for individuals to participate because of other responsibilities, and

time is limited as well for completion of the project. Financial support for the project is also limited and must be utilized on a priority basis.

It is therefore essential to establish a management system for developing the plan that will:

1. Define clearly what is to be accomplished.

2. Have clear communication between all segments of the school community, particularly between the Education Task Force, the Board of Education, and each school faculty.

3. Maximize utilization of all resources available within the school system and the community, as well as the special area service units, the State Department of Education, and special consultants.

4. Coordinate all information needed to aid in decision-making.

5. Monitor the progress made toward the completion of specific tasks.

6. Identify those problems, existing or potential, which may prevent the accomplishment of the task.

7. Facilitate the process for involving the total school-community in all stages of development and in decision-making.

8. Record accurately the decision made at each stage of development for incorporation into a final comprehensive education plan.

A management system will be used that will support the development of a comprehensive education plan for Lanier County and will provide for the communication of the plan to all parties involved in its development. The system will be organized so that as each stage of development is completed, the report will become a chapter in the final written plan.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SYSTEM

The management system to be used by the Education Task Force is one that can be used for developing each component of the plan as well as for managing the completion of each activity. An attempt was made to design a system that is clear, easy to use and functional. Since the Education Task Force is comprised of members with varying backgrounds, occupations and levels of formal education, consideration was given to the type of language used in describing the management system, the sequencing of stages, the involvement process and the communication system. The organization and description of the system should enhance the involvement of all concerned persons, which can only occur if the system is easily understood and is highly functional. It is perceived that people, not reports, are the reason for the system, and in this respect, the process is the most important function of the system.

The management system adopted by the Education Task Force is based on the concept of utilizing all available relevant data to make rational and acceptable decisions. The system will provide the structure for moving from what the Lanier County citizens believe about public education (Philosophy) to the identification of specific activities that involve students and teachers. It is organized into a logical sequence of steps called stages, for the purpose of this project. The system begins with the (1) establishment of an Educational Philosophy that reflects the beliefs of the Lanier County Citizens (what we believe about education) and moves sequentially from (2) defining all needs and interests of the youth and certain adult citizens of Lanier County to (3) establishing broad program goals to (4) assessing needs to (5) determining the status

of the program to (6) formulating objectives to (7) defining broad program concepts from which activities will be identified to (8) identifying activities which will reach the objectives to (9) identifying specific program and management needs for implementing activities to (10) evaluating the results of the activities to (11) disseminating information to the total school-community. Thus, the total system is a flow of sequenced events and activities.

The task at each stage will be generally completed before moving to the next stage because the decisions made at each stage of development will affect the outcome at each of the following stages. For example: Objectives (Stage 5) must be written before Appropriate Activities (Stage 7) can be planned.

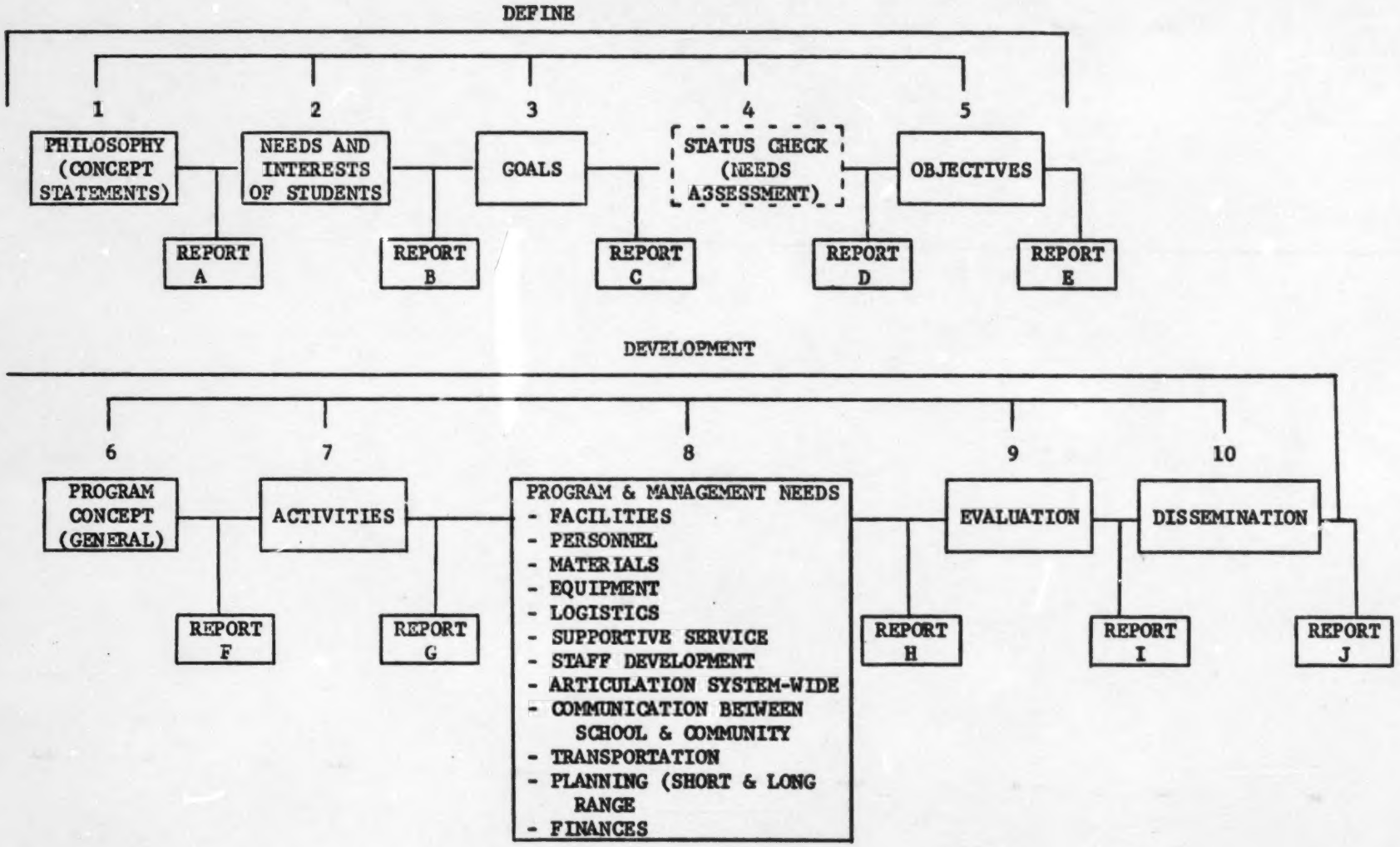
Each stage of the management system will be described in detail in a separate section of this document. It should be emphasized that at each stage in the system the critical decisions will be written into the final plan. A written report will follow the completion of each stage.

As stages of development are completed, beginning with the first stage and moving through the system, the description of the comprehensive education plan moves from very general to very specific. (See page 6 for a schematic description of the management system.)

Although the potentials of the management system adopted by the Education Task Force are unlimited, the system remains only a methodology without built-in guarantees for success. The key to its potential lies not in itself, but in the Education Task Force who will utilize it.

CHART I

MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



MANAGEMENT SYSTEM BY STAGES

STAGE 1: PHILOSOPHY (CONCEPT STATEMENTS)

The educational philosophy of Lanier County is a set of clear beliefs on which schools base programs and on which teachers base specific activities. It is the means by which the responsibilities for educating the citizens of Lanier County are identified. A description of the scope and depth of the educational programs is also included in the philosophy. More specifically, a philosophy consists of acceptable beliefs about the nature of the student, the instructional program and what it should do for the student, the general organizational framework, and the role of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the County Board of Education in the educational process. Philosophy is the first stage of the plan. Therefore, it is the first stage of management system and rightfully so, since all decisions about priorities, activities, and strategies will depend on what basic beliefs Lanier County citizens have about public education. It is during the development of this stage that questions relating to educational philosophy should be answered, such as:

1. Who should attend the public schools of Lanier County?
2. Who should be involved in planning the instructional program?
3. Who should decide what content will be taught in the schools?
4. How much should the school system serve as a change agent to the community?
5. At what age should a student start in the public school of Lanier County?

6. What age range of students should be housed in a particular building?

7. How do students learn best?

8. Should the school system be concerned about the social development of its youth?

9. What needs and interest of students should be met by the Lanier County schools?

These are but a few of many questions that will be answered during the philosophy stage of the plan.

The answers to the questions on philosophy will be written as concepts which reflect the beliefs about education that are acceptable to the Lanier County school-community. The concept style of identifying educational philosophy is desirable over other styles because it is more efficient in correlating specific objectives and activities to what people believe. The identified concept provides a general direction for the school system and is the basis from which goals, objectives, and activities are determined.

STAGE 2: NEEDS & INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

The Lanier County school system considers the student the most important element in the teaching/learning process. Therefore, the management system will, after the philosophy stage is completed, start with students so that all program concepts, objectives, and special activities will evolve from the characteristics, needs and interests of the target school population. During this stage, all needs and interests of the target school population will be identified and categorized as either interests

or needs, since each need or interest requires special attention at the assessment and program design stages of the management system. It should be emphasized that all needs and interests will be identified from an ideal standpoint and that the entire list of needs and interests may not need attention by the school system. Determination of the specific needs and interests of students in the school system will occur during stage 4, which is the status check of the current educational programs. The ideal needs and interests of students will serve as a basis for the status check, as well as influencing all program concepts.

In order to more effectively identify the needs of students, to have greater clarity of the needs and to enhance the utilization of the needs in planning subsequent stages, each need will be classified as either cognitive, affective or psychomotor. The classifications are taken from Benjamin S. Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.

Cognitive needs include those that are related to thinking, knowing, and problem solving (example: To know the multiplication table). The affective needs are those that relate to attitudes, values, interests, appreciations, and social-emotional adjustments (example: Positive self-esteem). The psychomotor needs relate directly to manual aid and motor skills (example: Hand and eye coordination). The use of Bloom's classification system should not delimit any decision-making about the mental, physical, social or emotional needs of students but should enhance decision-making and thoroughness, since it provides a system that is more easily identified with all areas of learning.

Interests of students are the things they want to accomplish and/or what they want to participate in. It is recognized that interests will vary with the maturation level of the student and may be either academic

or non-academic. The Lanier County schools believe that the natural inquisitiveness and independence of man should be accommodated in planning and implementing education programs. Thus, the interests of students merit exploration at this stage of plan development.

STAGE 3: GOALS

Goals are global statements describing one or more classes of desired outcomes that will provide general direction for the Lanier County School System. They should stress beliefs about education and not be concerned with time or measurability. For example, a goal might be: The student will develop decision-making skills which will assist him in dealing with his daily life experience. Another might be: Every high school graduate shall be able to get and hold a decent job.

Goals will not only provide general direction for the school system but will also be the basis from which both objectives and activities are determined. While it is possible to work on developing the philosophy, needs, and goal stages simultaneously, it is imperative that all goals be established before objectives and activities are formulated. A key to writing goals as they are defined above is to express desired outcomes as attitudes, knowledge, awareness, skills, or abilities.

STAGE 4: STATUS CHECK (NEEDS ASSESSMENT)

It is absolutely essential that a determination of the present status of the education program in Lanier County be established before program concepts and activities are finalized. The status of a program means

its current level of operation and is evaluated by determining how adequately the needs and interests of students are being met, the philosophy is operationalized and the goals are being reached. The difference between that which is desired (ideal) and the status of the program (real) will be used for justifying program changes and expansions and will influence the formulation of objectives and activities, as well as identifying new program concepts. Those program concepts and activities that prove to be effectively meeting the needs and interests of the present target school population will be automatically integrated into the Plan.

A needs assessment is necessary to complete the status check stage of the management system. It can be extremely time-consuming and demands massive involvement on the part of the total school-community. Therefore, the Education Task Force, after considering all given factors, must decide on the breadth and depth of the needs assessment. It goes without saying that the more comprehensive the needs assessment, the more accurately the discrepancies between the "ideal" and the "real" can be defined.

A detailed plan will be developed to monitor the needs assessment and will describe the types and sources of data, the instruments, the administration procedures, the target population, the dates, and the persons responsible for coordinating the collection of data. The needs of students, teachers, and programs will be described in a written report after all data has been collected, organized, and analyzed.

STAGE 5: OBJECTIVES

The next stage of the management system consists of stating the general objectives that evolve from a combination of goals established

in Stage 3 and the information gathered as a result of an assessment of the present status.

For the purpose of developing the plan, an objective is an operational statement describing a single desired outcome of an educational program. Objective statements will be characterized by describing outcomes that are measurable and clear, and in the statements the target population and time frame for the outcome will be identified. They will evolve from the needs and interests of the target school population and the goals for the school system. All objectives will be consistent with the concept statements (philosophy). Each goal will require several objectives while one objective may apply to more than one goal.

Since the development of the Plan is hampered by lack of time, all objectives will be formulated as more long-term than short-term. The time frame for the objectives will be no less than one year and no more than the amount of time required to complete a program component. A shorter time frame than one year is possible if several specific objectives are needed to accomplish a single outcome. It should be noted that the formulation of more short-term objectives would result in a more complete set of activities.

Each objective will include the target population, time, product or behavior, and method of measurement. Examples of objectives might be: The self-concept of at least fifty percent of the students in the Middle School will show some improvement on pre- and post-testing during the school year, as evidenced by the results of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory; or another example might be the average daily attendance for all students for the 1974-75 school year will be at least 94 percent as evidenced by the attendance reports.

Objectives will relate to attitudes, knowledge, awareness and skills, and distinct objectives will be written for each individual school population. Each objective will be stated in such explicit terms that it will be an easy matter to examine data at the end of the school year and to verify whether the objectives have been achieved.

STAGE 6: PROGRAM CONCEPT (GENERAL)

General program concepts are needed at this point in the management system to bridge the gap between the defining and the action stages of the system.

A program concept is a set of instructional or organizational strategies grouped under one title such as individualization, independent learning, continuous progress or open classroom. Program concepts enhance the translation of objectives into activities that are philosophically based. It should be noted that it is not the title that is important; instead it is the concepts signified by the title about learning and teaching and instructional and organizational strategies that are important. In order to complete this stage of the Plan, reference must be made to each belief statement in Stage 1 to ensure that the activities to be implemented by the school system are compatible with the school system's philosophy.

Programs concepts will be described for each school population, and since each concept will relate directly to philosophy and to the needs of students at different maturation levels, it is expected that all program concepts will not apply to each school population. Example of program concepts might be: A career awareness education program will be implemented

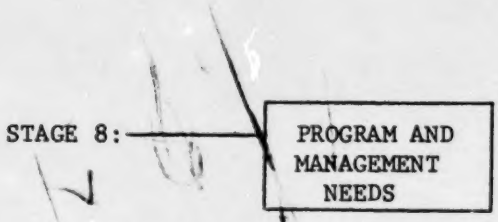
in the elementary school by integrating activities on career awareness into each content area; or another might be: The high school instructional program will be organized so that teachers can plan and implement activities in disciplinary teams.

It is during this stage that the general conceptualization of a comprehensive education plan will culminate. From this point on, the description of each stage will be in very specific terms.

STAGE 7: ACTIVITIES

Many alternative courses of action may be proposed as a means of accomplishing the stated objectives. Those activities that are most closely related to the program concepts will be the governing factors for completing this stage of the plan. Activities are the action stage of the plan and will identify the experiences that will be provided the target school population. It is at this stage of developing the Plan that the question, "How are we going to reach the objective?" will be answered. Activities will specify who will be involved, what will be done, when it will occur, where it will take place, and what resources will be needed. An example might be: A leadership class will be offered for high school students, during the special activity period for any students who want to develop leadership skills. A teacher, a facility, some printed materials and some media are needed to implement the activity.

Activities will be planned and described for each individual school population. They will be realistic in regard to resources and will be designed to bring about the achievement of the objectives.



It is evident by now that the management system provides a structure for planning that moves from the very general (philosophy) to the very specific (activities) description of the Plan. The program and management needs stage is a still more specific description of the plan, for it is during this stage that decisions of a logistical nature are made, particularly those that relate to process, organization, communication, personnel, space, materials, and time.

This stage will include a description of all resources and management needed to implement the comprehensive education program that has been planned for the Lanier County schools. It will include a complete description of:

1. All personnel needed to implement the total program.
2. All facilities needed to house the program at each school.
3. All materials and equipment.
4. A system for articulating and communicating among all segments of the total school-community.
5. All finances needed to support the total program.
6. All supportive services such as transportation, food, health, psychological, etc.
7. A continuous staff development program to upgrade skills, and knowledge of all personnel in the system.
8. A plan for continuous short- and long-range planning at both the system and individual school levels.

9. Policies and procedures that will govern the operation of the Lanier County School System.

A general budget incorporating the total annual cost of the Plan will be completed during the development of this stage.

STAGE 9: EVALUATION

An evaluation design will be a major component of the Plan and will be the process for determining whether objectives are reached, whether activities are effective, and whether there is a need for changes, deletions or additions in program objectives and activities. Evaluation results provide the information about whether an objective was or was not reached. Once this information is available, changes can be made in the objectives, the activities, or both. Therefore, evaluation is the means for gathering needed information for continuous planning. The evaluation design for the Plan will consist of a description of how to measure the success of each objective identified in Stage 5 of the Plan. It will not necessarily focus on each subject taught nor each grade level, since the objectives will be rather long-term.

The evaluation design will describe explicitly the way each general objective will be evaluated, and it will include a description of the evaluation instruments, the procedures for collection, processing and interpretation of data, persons responsible for each evaluation task and a list of milestones to aid in managing the evaluation task.

STAGE 10: DISSEMINATION

A comprehensive education plan will be incomplete without a definite system for dissemination of information, which will ensure a constant

check and accounting of progress. It requires that planning and involvement of all persons occur on a continuing basis. A plan for informing the school-community will be a major component of the Plan and will include the feeding back of evaluation results to those responsible for making decisions about program changes. The faculty of each school will certainly receive evaluation results, in order to analyze their objectives and activities.

The method of involving the school-community in the development of the Plan should be continued through the implementation stages.

A variety of communication methods will be employed to keep the school community informed and to receive feedback. Much of the communication will occur through organized groups of students, both those that are currently enrolled in the Lanier County schools and those that have dropped out, as well as parents, educators, and other Lanier County citizens. In addition, the newspaper and radio will be utilized for general announcements and reports.

It is recognized by the Board of Education that an open exchange of information and ideas is crucial to the success of an involvement process. Therefore, the participation of as many citizens of Lanier County as possible in developing the Plan will be encouraged.

INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

The Lanier County Board of Education recognizes that the education of youth and certain adults must be the shared responsibility of the community and the schools. Therefore, the schools need to be explicitly informed by the citizens about the directions the community wants school personnel to take, and conversely, the schools need to inform the community about educational trends and programs that would be important to the schools

and the community. Only in this manner can the schools pursue educational goals with the confidence required to attain them successfully. It is further recognized that the lack of parental involvement in making decisions about school programs in Lanier County could lead to apathy and resentment.

The Board of Education believes that any viable process of broad community involvement should provide for participation of all segments of the school-communities served by the school system--parents and taxpayers, students and educators--indeed all citizens.

In order to have broad participation in the developing of the Plan and in order to expedite the process, the involvement will occur through a Task Force of people representing the community, the administration, the individual schools and the special area service units. The Education Task Force will be generally responsible for processing the school-community through each stage of the management system. The educators will be the leaders and will assist community members and students in better identifying their needs and appropriate program concepts, and these educators will strive to help each segment of the school-community reach concensus and make valuable contributions based on their knowledge and expertise. Educators, since this is their field, will serve as facilitators of group meetings.

The meetings will be kept flexible and will provide for open interaction among all groups, while at the same time retaining a delicate balance that precludes any one group from dominating the process.

The Education Task Force will have a coordinator and will be organized into committees for completing certain tasks. The committees will process data for review and approval by the Education Task Force.

The Education Task Force will:

1. Meet with teachers, parents, and students to report the progress of the Education Task Force and to get input for decision-making.

2. Administer data collection instruments.

3. Tabulate data and assist with data interpretations.

4. Make recommendations to the Board of Education.

5. Synthesize ideas for the final draft of the Plan.

6. Seek approval from their constituents before final recommendations are presented to the Board of Education.

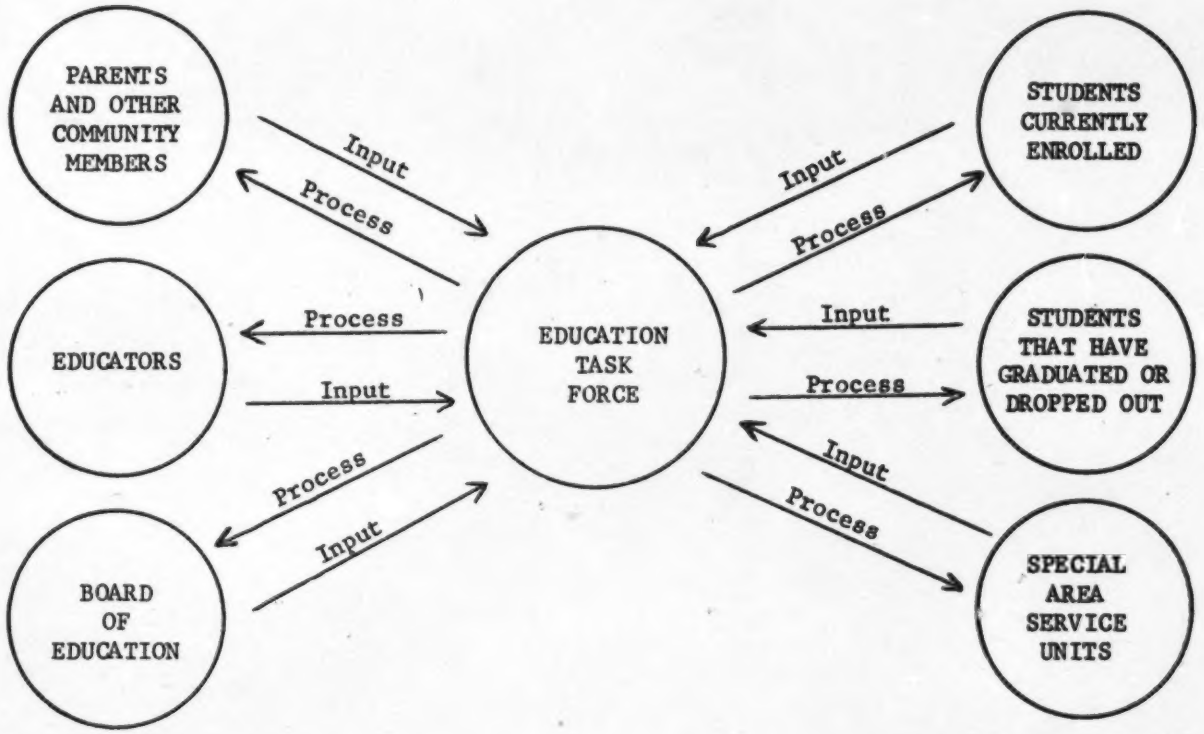
7. Communicate on a continuous basis with the community through the news media, special meetings, newsletters from the Education Task Force, etc.

8. Approve the final Plan before it is submitted to the Lanier County Board of Education for final approval.

The Education Task Force will unquestionably be responsible for involving other school-community people in the development of the Plan. Generally, the involvement process begins with the Education Task Force and moves to each segment of the school-community under the leadership of the members of the Task Force and returns to the Education Task Force. After the information or data has been synthesized or analyzed, it returns to the school-community for approval.

CHART 2

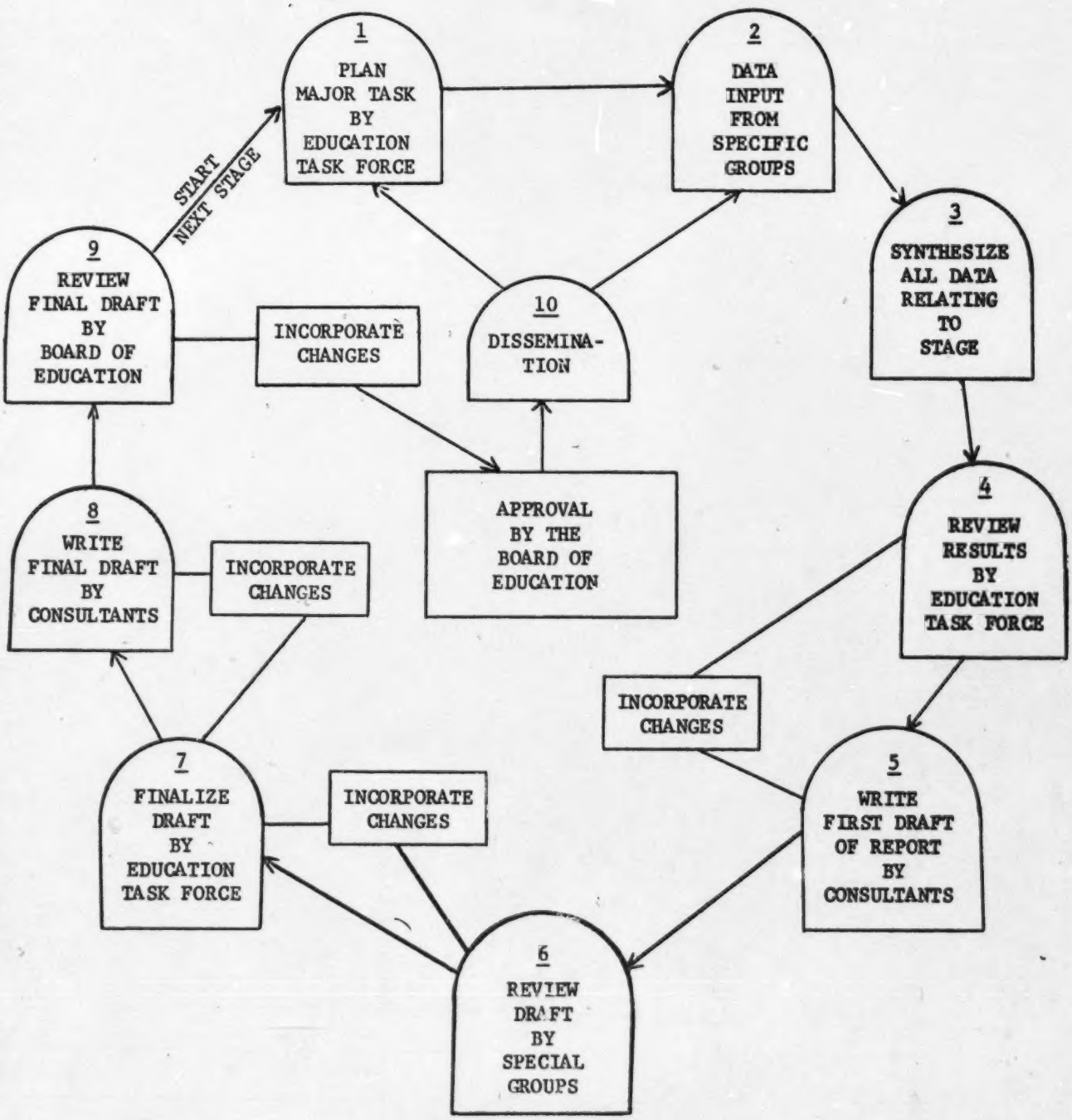
ORGANIZATION FOR INVOLVEMENT



The development of each stage of the Plan will follow a routine cycle of events in order to expedite the process and to ensure that each decision is endorsed by each segment of the school-community. The following cycle of events characterizes the flow of involvement and the type of major tasks to be completed. The cycle of events will occur for each stage of the Plan.

CHART 3

CYCLE OF EVENTS



It should be emphasized that one major task of the Education Task Force members will be to keep their constituents informed on a regular basis. This will require special faculty meetings, special meetings with students during the school day, and with parents during the evenings.

REPORTING

A written report will be produced upon completion of each stage of the Plan and will be disseminated to all segments of the school-community. A stage of the Plan will be considered completed when it has received approval from the Board of Education. Each report will be written so that it will become a section of the final Plan. The first report will be on the Philosophy stage (Report A) and the last one will be on Dissemination of Information (Report J).

SCHEDULE OF MAJOR EVENTS

A series of major events has been planned in sequence according to calendar dates. These major events are called MILESTONES. The purpose of milestones is to ensure that each task is accomplished on time and to aid in monitoring the progress of the overall development of the Plan.

MILESTONES	COMPLETION DATE 1974 SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	1975 JAN	FEB	MAR
1. Review guidelines with State Department of Education....June 7							
2. Identify the criteria for selecting a representative group of the school-community to serve as a Task Force.....	13						
3. Identify the Education Task Force	20						
4. Orientation for Education Task Force to guidelines and intent.....		4					
5. Design a management system for processing the development of a Plan		6					
6. Identify special groups representing the school and community for involvement		7					
7. Describe the scope and depth of the plan		7					
8. Plan task for completing the Philosophy Stage.....		7					
9. Appoint Task Force committees.....		7					
10. Orientation for all special groups to guidelines, intent and management system		11					
11. Collect data for the Philosophy Stage.....		18					

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MILESTONES	COMPLETION DATE 1974 SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	1975 JAN	FEB	MAR
12. Plan task for completing needs and interests stage			8				
13. Plan task for completing Goal Stage			8				
14. Plan task for completing Status Check Stage			8				
15. Write final draft of philosophy				6			
16. Write final draft of needs and interests				9			
17. Check status on needs assessment				13			
18. Write final draft of goals				22			
19. Complete data collection for status check stage				20			
20. Review the status of the overall plan				20			
21. Plan task for completing the objective stage				20			
22. Plan task for completing the program stage				20			
23. Complete analysis of status check data					6		
24. Write final draft of status check					17		
25. Write final draft of objectives					19		
26. Write final draft of program concepts					26		
27. Plan task for completing the Activity Stage						3	
28. Plan task for completing the Program and Management Need Stage						3	

MILESTONES	COMPLETION DATE 1974 SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	1975 JAN	FEB	MAR
29. Plan task for completing the evaluation and dissemination stages						3	
30. Write final draft of activities						9	
31. Write final draft of program and management needs						16	
32. Write final draft of evaluation and dissemination						20	
33. Complete final document						23	
34. Hold community-wide meeting for final review						28	
35. Submit to the State Department of Education							1

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